US Army Corps
of Engineers
North Central Division

GREAT LAKES LEVELS
UPDATE NO. 45
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Overall, precipitation on the Great Lakes basin was about average in March. The upper lakes (Superior and Michigan-Huron) were wet, and the lower lakes (Erie and Ontario) were dry. The reader is referred below to the table of estimated precipitation for the month of March.

Provisional Great Lakes Precipitation
(inches)

	Superior	Michigan-Huron	Erie	Ontario	Great Lakes Basin
1989*	2.0	2.5	2.2	2.2	2.3
Average(1900-87)	1.7	2.1	2.7	2.6	2.2
Difference	+0.3	+0.4	-0.5	-0.4	+0.1
% of Average	115%	120%	80%	85%	105%

* Estimated

There is potential for heavy spring snowmelt runoff in the northern United States portion of the Great Lakes basin, with the possibility of localized flooding in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, the extreme northern portion of lower Michigan, and northeastern Wisconsin. The extensive snow coverage in these areas contains approximately 7 to 11 inches of water, ranging from 140% to 250% of average amounts across the region. Drainage areas subject to heavy runoff and/or flooding include the Ontonagon, Escanaba and Menominee Rivers, and tributary streams in northern lower Michigan. The potential for flooding in these areas will depend on occurrences of rapid warming, the amount and timing of spring rains, and ice jamming in the rivers. The Lake Winnebago-Fox-Wolf River, Wisconsin, also has above average snow accumulations, with 5 to 6 inches of water in the upper reaches of that basin.

The National Weather Service's 30-day outlook for April calls for moderate to heavy precipitation for the Lakes Superior, Huron, Erie and Ontario basins and moderate precipitation for the Lake Michigan basin. The 30-day outlook also calls for average to below-average temperatures for all the basins, except Lake Huron which is expected to be about average. The 90-day outlook calls for below-average temperatures for the basin (except for the southern portion of Lake Michigan) and above-average precipitation for the whole basin.

The water levels of Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron are expected to remain close to long-term average over the next six months while Lakes St. Clair and Erie are expected to be above average. This month Lake Ontario lost ground relative to its average level; its level is currently about 10 inches below average. Because of the continued below average conditions on the Lake Ontario basin, the International St. Lawrence River Board of Control initiated flow reductions (from Plan 1958-D flows) beginning at midnight on 29 March. The Board approved an underdischarge plan with a goal of raising Lake Ontario water levels about six inches.

On 30 March, removal of the Lake Erie-Niagara River ice boom was started with two spans of the 22-span boom opened. An additional 17 spans were removed by 3 April. Complete opening is expected by the end of the first week of April.

for THEODORE VANDER ELS
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Commanding

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